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1	Joshua B. Swigart, Esq. (SBN: 225557)	FILED
2	josh@westcoastlitigation.com Robert L. Hyde, Esq. (SBN: 227183)	07 APR 25 PM 3: 27
3	bob(a) westcoastlitigation.com Hyde & Swigart	SOUTHERN DISTRICT COURT
4	411 Camino Del Rio South, Suite 301 San Diego, CA 92108-3551	POL POLIFORNIA
5	411 Camino Del Rio South, Suite 301 San Diego, CA 92108-3551 Telephone: (619) 233-7770 Facsimile: (619) 297-1022	DEPUTY
6	Attorneys for Plaintiff Douglas E. Bellows	
7	Douglas E. Bellows	

United States District Court Southern District Of California

Douglas E. Bellows,	Case No.: 207 CV 0 75 0 BEN CAB
PLAINTIFF, v. ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE MANAGEMENT, INC.,	COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES JURY TRIAL DEMANDED
Defendant.	·

Introduction

1. The United States Congress has found abundant evidence of the use of abusive, deceptive, and unfair debt collection practices by many debt collectors, and has determined that abusive debt collection practices contribute to the number of personal bankruptcies, to marital instability, to the loss of jobs, and to invasions of individual privacy. Congress wrote the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692 et seq. ("FDCPA"), to eliminate abusive debt collection practices by debt collectors, to insure that those debt collectors who refrain from using abusive debt collection practices are not competitively disadvantaged, and to promote consistent State action to protect

consumers against debt collection abuses.¹

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- 2. The California legislature has determined that the banking and credit system and grantors of credit to consumers are dependent upon the collection of just and owing debts and that unfair or deceptive collection practices undermine the public confidence that is essential to the continued functioning of the banking and credit system and sound extensions of credit to consumers. The Legislature has further determined that there is a need to ensure that debt collectors exercise this responsibility with fairness, honesty and due regard for the debtor's rights and that debt collectors must be prohibited from engaging in unfair or deceptive acts or practices.²
- DOUGLAS E. BELLOWS, ("Plaintiff"), by Plaintiff's attorneys, brings this 3. actions of action challenge the ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE MANAGEMENT, INC., ("Defendant"), with regard to attempts by Defendant, a debt collector, to unlawfully and abusively collect a debt allegedly owed by Plaintiff, and this conduct caused Plaintiff damages.
- Unless otherwise indicated, the use of any defendant's name in this Complaint 4. includes all agents, employees, officers, members, directors, heirs, successors, assigns, principals, trustees, sureties, subrogees, representatives and insurers of that defendant named.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 5. Jurisdiction of this Court arises pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(d), and 28 U.S.C. § 1367 for supplemental state law claims.
- 6. This action arises out of Defendant's violations of the following: the Rosenthal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, California Civil Code §§ 1788-1788.32 (RFDCPA), the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692 et seq.

¹⁵ U.S.C. §§ 1692(a)-(e) Cal. Civ. Code §§ 1788.1 (a)-(b)

- 7. Because Defendant does business within the State of California, personal jurisdiction is established.
- 8. Venue is proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391.

PARTIES

- 9. Plaintiff is a natural person who resides in the City of Solana Beach, County of San Diego, State of California and is obligated or allegedly obligated to pay a debt, and is a "consumer" as that term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3).
- 10. Plaintiff is a natural person from whom a debt collector sought to collect a consumer debt which was due and owing or alleged to be due and owing from Plaintiff, and is a "debtor" as that term is defined by California Civil Code § 1788.2(h).
- 11. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that Defendant is a company operating from the City of Thorofare, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey.
- 12. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that Defendant is a person who uses an instrumentality of interstate commerce or the mails in a business the principal purpose of which is the collection of debts, or who regularly collects or attempts to collect, directly or indirectly, debts owed or due or asserted to be owed or due another and is therefore a "debt collector" as that term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).
- 13. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that Defendant, in the ordinary course of business, regularly, on behalf of himself or herself or others, engages in debt collection as that term is defined by California Civil Code § 1788.2(b), and is therefore a "debt collector" as that term is defined by California Civil Code § 1788.2(c).

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14. This case involves money, property or their equivalent, due or owing or alleged to be due or owing from a natural person by reason of a consumer credit transaction. As such, this action arises out of a "consumer debt" and "consumer credit" as those terms are defined by Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.2(f).

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

- 15. At all times relevant, Plaintiff was an individual residing within the State of California.
- 16. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that at all times relevant Defendant conducted business in the State of California.
- 17. Sometime before February 2, 2007, Plaintiff allegedly incurred financial obligations to HSBC CARD SERVICES that were money, property, or their equivalent, which is due or owing, or alleged to be due or owing, from a natural person to another person and were therefore "debt(s)" as that term is defined by California Civil Code §1788.2(d), and a "consumer debt" as that term is defined by California Civil Code §1788.2(f).
- 18. These financial obligations were primarily for personal, family or household purposes and are therefore "debt(s)" as that term is defined by 15 U.S.C. §1692a(5).
- 19 19. Sometime thereafter, but before February 2, 2007, Plaintiff allegedly fell behind in the payments allegedly owed on the alleged debt. Plaintiff takes no position as to whether or not this alleged debt was actually owed.
 - 20. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that subsequently, but before February 2, 2007, the alleged debt was assigned, placed, or otherwise transferred, to Defendant for collection.
 - 21. On or about February 2, 2007, Defendant sent, and Plaintiff received, a dunning letter addressed to Plaintiff's home and in the name of Defendant. (See attached Plaintiff's Exhibit 1).

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- This letter to Plaintiff, sent by Defendant, was a "communication" as that term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(2), a "debt collection" as that term is defined by Cal. Civ. Code 1788.2(b), and an "initial communication" consistent with 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a) and Cal. Civ. Code § 1812.700(b).
 - 23. Sometime during the first week of February, 2007, Defendant's agent, "Lisa Daniels," contacted Plaintiff by leaving a voice message on the answering machine at Plaintiff's home.
 - 24. This communication merely stated a telephone number that was subsequently determined to be that of Defendant's business, and a demand that Plaintiff call that number.
 - 25. Without exception, this communication did not provide Defendant's company name or that Defendant was a debt collector, thereby lacking meaningful disclosure of the caller's identity. As such, the communication violates 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692d(6). Because this action violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d(6), it also violates Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.17
- 16 26. In this same message, Defendant failed to state that the communication was
 17 from a debt collector. As such, Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(11).
- 18 27. Defendant failed to disclose its identity in this voice message, and as such,
 19 violated Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.11(b).
 - 28. On or about the next day, Defendant's agent, "Mr. McGraw," contacted Plaintiff by leaving a voice message on the answering machine at Plaintiff's home.
 - 29. This communication merely stated a telephone number that was subsequently determined to be that of Defendant's business, and a demand that Plaintiff call that number.
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- 30. Without exception, this communication did not provide Defendant's company name or that Defendant was a debt collector, thereby lacking meaningful disclosure of the caller's identity. As such, the communication violates 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692d(6). Because this action violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d(6), it also violates Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.17
- 31. In this same message, Defendant failed to state that the communication was 6 7 from a debt collector. As such, Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(11).
- 8 32. Defendant failed to disclose its identity in this voice message, and as such, violated Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.11(b).
- 33. On or about the next day, Defendant's agent, "Lisa Daniels," again contacted 10 11 Plaintiff by leaving a voice message on the answering machine at Plaintiff's 12 home.
 - 34. This communication merely stated a telephone number that was subsequently determined to be that of Defendant's business, and a demand that Plaintiff call that number.
 - 35. Without exception, this communication did not provide Defendant's company name or that Defendant was a debt collector, thereby lacking meaningful disclosure of the caller's identity. As such, the communication violates 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692d(6). Because this action violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d(6), it also violates Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.17
- 36. In this same message, Defendant failed to state that the communication was 21 22 from a debt collector. As such, Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(11).
- 37. Defendant failed to disclose its identity in this voice message, and as such, 23 24 violated Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.11(b).
- 38. On or about February 13, 2007, Defendant contacted Plaintiff by telephone 25 and demanded payment of the alleged debt. 26
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- 39. During this conversation, Defendant stated, in a tone and manner that Plaintiff felt was extremely abusive, degrading, and embarrassing, "You're not a man. You can't pay your bills! Put me on the phone with the man of the house."
- 40. These statements had the natural consequence of harassing, oppressing, or abusing Plaintiff in connection to the collection of the alleged debt. As such, Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d. Because Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d, Defendant also violated Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.17.
- 41. During this same conversation, Plaintiff asked to speak to an agent of Defendant's with whom Plaintiff previously spoke. Plaintiff was not sure of this agent's name, but thought it was "Ron" or "Rodney."
- 42. In response, Defendant accused Plaintiff of being a "racist" because, according to Defendant, asking for anyone named "Rodney" is tantamount to making a racial slur against Rodney King. Plaintiff felt that Defendant's logic in this regard was a deliberate distortion of Plaintiff's words and meant to abuse and harass him, and Plaintiff asked for a "Rodney" only in an attempt to speak to someone Plaintiff had known from past experience to be less abusive than the agent currently speaking to Plaintiff, by the name of "Rodney."
- 43. Defendant's unfounded claim that Plaintiff was a "racist" had the natural consequence of harassing, oppressing, or abusing Plaintiff in connection to the collection of the alleged debt. As such, Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d, Defendant also violated Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.17.
- 44. During this same conversation, Defendant stated that if Plaintiff failed to pay the alleged debt, Defendant would instruct HSBC CARD SERVICES to file criminal charges against Plaintiff.

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- 45. This statement represented the threat to take an action that cannot legally be taken or that Defendant did not intend to take, and violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(5). Because this action violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(5), it also violated Cal. Civ. Code 1788.17.
 - 46. This statement also represents a false, deceptive, or misleading means used in connection with the collection of the alleged debt because Defendant never intended to instruct HSBC to file such a charge against Plaintiff. As such, Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692e and 1692e(10). Because Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692e and 1692e(10), Defendant also violated Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.17.
 - 47. This statement also represents the false statement that a legal proceeding has been, will be, or is about to be instituted unless payment of the alleged debt is made. As such, Defendant violated Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.13(j).

CAUSES OF ACTION CLAIMED BY PLAINTIFF

COUNT I

VIOLATIONS OF THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT 15 U.S.C. § 1692 ET SEQ.

- 48. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.
- 49. The foregoing acts and omissions constitute numerous and multiple violations of the FDCPA, including but not limited to each and every one of the above-cited provisions of the FDCPA, 15 U.S.C. § 1692 et seq.
- 50. As a result of each and every violation of the FDCPA, Plaintiff is entitled to any actual damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(1); statutory damages in an amount up to \$1,000.00 pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(2)(A); and, reasonable attorney's fees and costs pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(3) from each Defendant.

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1 COUNT II 2 VIOLATION OF THE ROSENTHAL FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT 3 Cal. Civ. Code §§ 1788-1788.32 (RFDCPA) 51. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this 4 5 Complaint as though fully stated herein. 6 52. The foregoing acts and omissions constitute numerous and multiple violations of the RFDCPA. 7 8 53. As a result of each and every violation of the RFDCPA, Plaintiff is entitled to 9 any actual damages pursuant to Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.30(a); statutory damages for a knowing or willful violation in the amount up to \$1,000.00 10 11 pursuant to Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.30(b); and reasonable attorney's fees and 12 costs pursuant to Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.30(c) from each Defendant. 13 PRAYER FOR RELIEF WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that judgment be entered against Defendant for: 14 15 FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT an award of actual damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(1) in an 16 amount to be adduced at trial, from Defendant; 17 • an award of statutory damages of \$1,000.00, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 18 19 1692k(a)(2)(A);an award of costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees, pursuant to 20 21 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(3). 22 ROSENTHAL FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT 23 an award of actual damages pursuant to California Civil Code § 1788.30(a) in an amount to be adduced at trial, from Defendant; 24 • an award of statutory damages of \$1,000.00, pursuant to Cal. Civ. Code 25 26 § 1788.30(b); an award of costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees, pursuant to 27 28 Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.30(c).

TRIAL BY JURY

54. Pursuant to the seventh amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America, Plaintiff is entitled to, and demands, a trial by jury.

Dated: 4/23/0>

Respectfully submitted, **HYDE & SWIGART**

By:

Joshua B. Swigart
Attorney for Plaintiff

FROM: 0

PHONE NO. : 1 909 6291216

Feb. 14 2007 01:45PM P1

P.O BOX 129 Thorofare, NJ 08086-0129

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

February 02, 2007

5480-6511

Acct#; 8742986 **DOUGLAS E BELLOWS** 1530 GANESHA PL POMONA CA 91768-1903



Thorofare, NJ 08086-0129

Creditor:

HSBC CARD SERVICES

Account #:

5408010016875250

Total Duc: Claim Date:

\$3441.00 02 FEB 2007

Important Notice

Dear DOUGLAS E BELLOWS:

Your account was assigned to us for one reason, to secure payment in full ---

Please cooperate by mailing your payment. Do not ignore this request.

If payment in full will not be sent or if you need to speak with a representative, please contact us at the below listed number.

LOCAL (856) 931-4500 Ext. 6343 TOLL FREE (800) 220-3350 Ext. 6343

Make payment the quick and easy way. To use our service dial (800) 220-3350, press #1 enter your account number and simply follow

For your convenience we also accept the following payment options:

Western Union Quick Collect

Money Gram

Credit Card (Visu, MusterCard, Discover, American Express-please fill out form on bottom portion & return) Pay by Phone (Payment will be debited directly from your bank account electronically through the ACH System)

Please call either number above for assistance.

Unless you notify this office within 30 days after receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of this debt or any portion thereof, this office will assume this debt is valid. If you notify this office in writing within 30 days from receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of this debt or any portion thereof, this office will obtain verification of the debt or obtain a copy of a judgment and mail you a copy of such judgment or verification. If you request this office in writing within 30 days after receiving this notice this office will provide you with the name and address of the original creditor, if different from the current creditor.

This communication is from a debt collection agency.

This is an attempt to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose

NOTICE: SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION THAT MAY APPLY TO YOU

HSBC CARD SERVICES Creditor: Account #: 5408010016875250

Total Duc: \$3441.00 Claim Date: 02 FEB 2007

DOUGLAS E BELLOWS 1530 GANESHA PL **POMONA CA 91768-1903**



IF PAYDIG BY VISA, MASYERCARD, DISCOV	ER ÓR AMERICAN EXPRESS, FILL OUT E	Erom.
DVIBA WELL MASTERCARD	DISCOVER DAMER EXP	125.55
CAND NUMBER	EXP. DATE AMOUNT	
RAJELLA VINES	MUST PICLUDE'S DIGIT SECURITY CODE FROM LIACK OF CARD	

Phone number for verification of information if necessary:(_ Payment by credit card will be processed by PayMyBill

Acct#; 8742986 ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE MANAGEMENT. INC. P.O. BOX 129 THOROFARE, NJ 08086-0129 Madalikadadadadaanadahlidaablid



FROM: 0

PHONE NO. : 1 909 6291216

Feb. 14 2007 01:47PM P1

The state Rosenthal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act and the Federal Fair Debt Collections Practices Act require that, except under unusual circumstances, collectors may not contact you before 8:00 a.m. or after 9:00 p.m. They may not harass you by using threats of violence or arrest or by using obscenc language. Collectors may not use false or misleading statements or call you at work if they know or have reason to know that you may not receive personal calls at work. For the most part, collectors may not tell another person, other than your attorney or spouse, about your debt. Collectors may contact another person to confirm your location or enforce a judgment. For information about debt collection activities, you may contact the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-FIC-HELP or www.fic.gov.

Colorado Residents: FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLORADO FAIR DEBT COLLECTIONS PRACTICES ACT, SEE WWW.AGO.STATE.CO.US/CADC/CADCmain.cfm

Maine Residents:

This company is licensed as a collection agency in the State of Maine under the name: New Jersey Accounts Receivable Management, Inc.

Massachusetts Residents:

NOTICE OF IMPORTANT RIGHTS

You have the right to make written or oral request that telephone calls regarding your debt not be made to you at your home or place of employment. Any such oral request will be valid for only place of employment. Any such oral request will be valid for only ten days unless you provide written confirmation of the request postmarked or delivered within seven days of such request. You may terminate this request by writing to the collection agency.

MASSACHUSETTS HOURS AND ADDRESS

Monday - Friday 10:00AM - 3:00PM ET

5230 Washington Street

Saturday

8:00 AM - 12:00 Noon ET West Roxbury, MA 02132

City of New York Residents: CITY OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

License Number: 1021362

North Carolina Residents:

North Carolina Department of Insurance #3179

Minpesota Residents:

This collection agency is licensed by the Minnesota Department of Commerce.

Tennessee Residents:

This collection agency is licensed by the Collection Service Board of the Department of Commerce and Insurance.

Our local address is 2394 E. Camelback Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85016. Office hours are: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Nevada Residenta:

Our local address is 20 Bonneville Avenue Las Vegas, Nevada 89101.

Washington State Residents:

Our local address is 512 Bell Street Edmonds, WA 98020-3147.

The JS-44 civil cover sheet and rules of court. This form, appro	the information contained hereioved by the Judicial Conference	n neither replace nor sur	DUVER SHEET pplement the filing and service of September 1974, is required for t	f pleadings or other papers as required to the Clerk of Court for the	uited by laws except as provided by local repurpose of initialing the civil docket
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UNITED STATES
DISTRICT COURT
Southern District of California
San Diego Division

137539 - A2
Spril 25, 2007

Code Case # Qty Amount

CV0864900 3-07-CV-0758 60.00 CH
Judge - BENETIZ
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